

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES - DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH

OFFICE OF THE MEDICAL DIRECTOR

**4.1 PARAMETERS FOR THE DMH OUTPATIENT CLINIC ENVIRONMENT**

January 2002

**I. INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of these parameters is to provide a foundation and benchmark for quality management relating to the environment in which clinical treatment occurs. They do not supercede specific DMH policies and procedures

**II. PHYSICAL DESIGN**

- A. Overall clinic appearance should be well maintained and convey respect for clients.
- B. There should be full access to multistoried facilities for disabled individuals.
- C. Waiting areas should be quiet and pleasant; soft music may be provided.
- D. Chairs should be comfortable and clean.
- E. Temperature should be comfortable (68-80 F).
- F. Drinking water should be available on every floor.
- G. Restrooms should be available on each floor.
- H. Interview areas should be enclosed and reasonably soundproofed.
- I. Clinic layout should be based upon optimum clinical function, taking into account appropriate use of space and proper patient flow.
- J. Medication and rooms should be located in central areas and have proper and safe equipment and storage cabinets that can be used to secure medications and clinical equipment. Hand washing facilities are also a requirement for these rooms.

### **III. RECEPTION**

- A. There should be ongoing training for clerical staff regarding customer service orientation, interpersonal skills, and special situations.
- B. Waiting time for client to speak with receptionist should be less than 5 minutes.
- C. Probable duration of waiting time for clinical services should be determined and communicated to client by receptionist.

### **IV. SERVICES**

- A. Waiting area amenities should, at minimum, include drinking fountains and reading materials.
- B. Capacity and provisions for childcare should be clearly specified at each clinic.
- C. Parking capacity and arrangements for automobiles should be clearly specified at each clinic.

### **V. PRIVACY**

- A. Client names should not be used on intercom systems beyond waiting area.
- B. Clinical questioning should occur in private interview areas only.
- C. Medical records and other client information should be stored and used only in clinical and clerical areas.

### **VI. SAFETY AND SECURITY**

- A. Waiting areas should be completely visible to clinic staff at all times.
- B. Interview areas should be safely designed, including alarm systems for clinicians, placement near well-traveled areas, furnishings that are not hazardous, and specific interview areas for high-risk situations.

- C. Clinic staff should be well trained in safety and emergency procedures.
- D. Trained security personnel should be present in high-risk areas.
- E. Metal detectors, when installed, should be maintained in working condition.
- F. Appropriate signage regarding impermissibly of alcohol, firearms, or other weapons should be in clear view, and such items should be confiscated when found.
- G. Environmental safety hazards should be minimized for all age groups. This includes implementation of special safety provisions for children as appropriate.